EVEL
ONE

"Truth Is One, Men Call It By Various Names."
—Rig Veda

VEDANTA QUARTERLY

Message of the East

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DIVINE GUIDANCE

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Volume XLVII Number 1

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VEDANTA QUARTERLY

MESSAGE OF THE EAST

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Message of the East

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."
—*Ezekiel*

"Light shall come again from the East."
—*Tyndall*

VOLUME XLVII 1958 NUMBER 1

A PRAYER

by Swami Paramananda

O Supreme, all-abiding Spirit
We open our hearts to Thy light.
May it penetrate our innermost depth.
Thou art eternal, Thou art ever present
within us and without us.
Do Thou manifest Thyself, that Thy presence
may destroy all our doubt and despondency;
that in Thy light we may perceive
what is true, real and essential.
Light Thou within us a lamp of understanding,
that through it we may see all things
clearly.
O Thou infinite, all-loving Spirit, make
our hearts free from all that is un-
loving, harsh and discordant.
Make our mind pure, that with a pure mind
we may obtain our contact with Thee.
Thou art the Giver of all light; fill us
with Thy divine light.
Thou art the Giver of inspiration and strength;
give us true inspiration and strength by
which we may reach our goal.

DIVINE GUIDANCE

by Swami Paramananda

There are many ways that we reach out for divine guidance, help and protection. Sometimes we feel a pressing need; we pray and our prayers are answered. But these flashes of spiritual interest come and go; they have very little stability because they aim at material ends, and when these ends are attained we are quick to forget. But there is also another way of reaching out — from the fulness of our heart when we have no apparent need. It is not a question of bargaining to gain a little happiness or a little comfort. There is no calculation. Instead there is within us a yearning, a spiritual feeling that is lasting and satisfying to the soul. The others also gain their end, but it is like an exchange or a trade. Many people think that is the only way, the only aim and hope of religion — to go to church to pray for your own welfare, your family, your health, your safety. But this is not enough; and as our spiritual nature is unfolded we begin to realize our at-onement with Divinity and the needlessness of asking for blessings which are perpetually ours, for in Him we find the answer to all life's requirements.

When one enters a room with a light he does not have to ask the darkness to go. In the presence of light, darkness vanishes. And before the blessing of the spiritual Presence all things harmful and detrimental fade into nothingness. We do not have to implore and beg and ask.

Often we miss the gist of existence by merely following the cut and dried path of life. In fact everything is

in vain, all that we acquire, all that we would like to gain in life, if it does not include our spiritual unfoldment; for in spiritual unfoldment we find the unfoldment of all else — our body unfolds, our mind unfolds, our senses unfold, all our inner faculties unfold. Instead of living in a closed circle, instead of using our own limited abilities always with a sense of restriction, we are able to transcend the restriction; for when these human attributes have the divine stamp they are no longer limited by circumstance.

We may not believe in that. We do have very good reason to doubt, for as we exercise our body and mind and senses we find that they are full of limitations. They blunder, they misguide us, they fail us. However, when we have brought them into contact with That which transforms, even though we have the same hands and feet and mind and body, they are different because they have been changed, they have become transfigured, and the boundary line has been removed.

There is an Indian parable about the philosopher's stone which by mere contact causes even a vile object, a harmful object to become transformed. It may retain its shape but no longer can it retain its dark propensities—like the sword which could no longer harm anything after it had been touched by the stone.

The same is true of the mind which resents, which envies, which is jealous and hateful. It is incapable of these reactions once it has come in contact with the divine principle. Before this connection is made we plan that we are going to live in a certain way; if things fit in with our plans and if we are careful, we might be able to do it to a certain extent, but it is very uncertain. We forget. Not that we want to forget, but we do for-

get; we forget our own standard of life. If a man remembers that it is beneath his dignity to be angry or to be harsh, he never can be. Take, for instance, a person who by living and ordering his life in a certain way creates no occasion for such things to arise. At first it may not be possible, but gradually these undesirable qualities disappear and holy living becomes so natural that he lives entirely without calculation.

You may think at first that it is a very long path for the average person to travel to reach that point. But we can make the way longer or shorter according to our own attitude of mind. Sometimes difficulties that surround our life seem insurmountable. How can mere man, a feeble person, ever venture to rise above these things? It would be difficult and impossible if he tried only by his small, limited means; but when this human mind and all the human faculties seek the aid of something which is not human but divine, then man has all his human strength plus an added something which permits him to succeed and to reach ever higher and higher goals. All fetters are broken when he depends not merely on himself, but reaches out and seeks higher guidance for his every thought and action.

That is the object of the devotional life. Devotion to what? To our ideal. You say, "What is an ideal?" Every human being should have an ideal. Your ideal and my ideal and somebody else's ideal may vary slightly in their outer form, but we should have something, because it safeguards our life. Otherwise our life is very little removed from any ordinary animal's life — merely occupied with eating, drinking, sleeping and sense pleasures. These things we have in common. All living beings have instinctive feelings; there is no su-

perior tendency in that. By moulding them, directing them, transforming them, we transcend to another plane; that is, we use life to its best advantage. This we can do.

We all have the power to lengthen our journey or shorten it. We can go round and round and not seem to make any progress because we go over the same ground. Even when we have been shown the path we are not always able to take it. There is something in us which holds us back, even though our discrimination, like a brilliant searchlight, shows us our course. Why is this so? Because something we are unaccustomed to, we cannot take up at once. Habit is a difficult thing to surmount. Often we lack courage; sometimes we lack conviction; sometimes we are divided. These qualities we all have and may continue to have; but we can also discard them through the aid of divine power. We should never try to stand alone, for alone we are not safe nor are we safeguarding human life, human interest or progress.

The best contribution a man brings into the world is not what he may make with his hands, but what he has evolved through his higher consciousness. His hands may aid him to give it a form that may be useful to society, but the real contribution, the real gift, the lasting and most beneficial thing, we evolve through our spiritual consciousness; and every one has access to that. There we find a rest which no amount of sleep can give us, a power which refreshes us from all this wear and tear and weariness of body and mind. We feel full of doubt and scepticism when we allow ourselves to become saturated with material things, but we do not need to. No matter how crowded our life is, we can so

organize it that we are able to bring in an element of spiritual consecration. Do it in your own way. You don't have to make a show. In fact there is no need for any show. All that it concerns is yourself and your spiritual ideal. Do it silently and quietly. Then it grows and you find that you express even through your ordinary action and word that to which you have aspired. Even the casual word you utter will have the stamp of spiritual authority. That is the way that life transcends its material sphere. When we have this we may live in the world, in the thick of it, and yet not feel torn by it, nor thwarted by it, nor swept away by it, because we have the greatest safeguard man can ever know.

These things we are not able to accomplish through mere mental concept or calculation; otherwise it would be perfectly easy for a person to take a text book and memorize certain phrases, certain ideas, and to say he knows the Truth. Truth is not contained in words; words are only expressions of Truth. But when man has found it he will hear the echo within himself and will know. It is a tremendous stimulant when we read or hear something spoken if it comes directly from a living source. But we must make such ideals alive in ourselves. We must consciously make them a part of our being. This is the special province of devotional life. It makes spiritual reality vital — not merely a theory or a dogma, but something we feel and know. We become so absolutely convinced of what is ours that nothing can shake us. Circumstances, calamities, difficulties — under all conditions we maintain our balance because we have found That which is unchangeable.

To live is nothing, unless to live be to know Him by whom we live.

—Ruskin

ROADS

by Astrid Setterwall Angstrom

It is very rare that an artist or a poet is offered the opportunity to explain his own work and how it came into form. I am therefore very glad to answer Gayatri Devi's request to present my little book of poems that I have called *Roads*. It is written in my own language, Swedish. The translation into English was made by Caroline Schleef, an American lady, who out of love for the Swedish language, which is not rich in words but has a singing quality due to its long vowels, has translated several works of other poets.

The first part of this little collection is called *From My Workshop*. It is all written in the first person. I am the wood carver who carves, day and night, the image of the Mother of God. I am the painter who tries in vain to put on my canvas the luminous colors of the vision I carry within. And in deep despair I burn my futile attempts. I am a layer of mosaics. The pieces that I have have to find and put together are human experiences. The ones with the most brilliant lustre I found within a child and in the hearts of those who have suffered deeply. When once these pieces of different color are all fitted together they will form the image of my God.

The second part is named *From the Roads of Seeking*. I have thrown away my tools and closed the door of my workshop behind me. I feel the need to discover new aspects of the Highest. And I go forth as a pilgrim to prove the truth of the words that once were said, "That Thou are love, that Thou are life," and, "I will find Thee in every man, in every woman."

The inner experiences along the roads are told in separate nameless poems. The pilgrim goes to the temples and performs the prescribed rituals, but finds it necessary to proceed further and leave traditions behind. It hurts to have to break up. It hurts to have to walk alone on the "via dolorosa of loneliness" and to be exposed to the ridicule of those who do not hear the urgent call that rings within, "Stand up, leave all and follow Me." Stripped of ambition and vanity, free from the idea of owning anything, a pilgrim has to stand in honest nakedness before the vision of the Highest.

The final understanding is that the only moment one owns is the present, and that the most important man is he who is near now. This is the thought that is expressed in the following poem which is next to the last in the collection:

In all the world this moment only is mine own —
nothing more.
It was this fleeting instant, my goal in all
that's gone before.
One only can I share it with — 'tis he who
is beside me now.
His burden's weight I'll share with him, the
load he staggeringly bears.
Does he lie dying, then beside him I'll be
staying
And with my robe I'll wipe from off his brow
the sweat of anguish.
But if he's one who on the open road takes
up his fiddle
To play at eventide in joy, in life's de-
light and rapture,
Then will I be beside him there to share
his heart's full gladness.

In all the world this moment only is mine own —
nothing more.
For out of reach, howe'er I will it, is that
hour so swiftly gone.
And none may say if in my life's next moment
I will be alone.
And none will know if then my hourglass sands
have run their course or no!

MYSTERY OF SELF

by Sister Daya

And this above all, to thine own self be true, and it must follow as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man.

We are all familiar with this saying, yet how much thought have we given to the real meaning implied in these words? Being true to oneself; it seems so simple as far as our understanding of it goes. But how many of us really know that self to which we must be true?

Often we find a conflict within ourselves; one part wishes to go one way while the other part wishes to go another. We may become confused and ask ourselves, "Which is the self to whom I owe my allegiance; which is the self to whom I must give my trust, so that I may be protected throughout my life from being false to anything or to any man? Here we come against a great wall; in fact it might be compared to the hedge of thorns through which the Prince, in "Sleeping Beauty," had to break in order to reach the Princess; or it might be compared with the ring of fire through which the hero,

Siegfried, had to pass in order to attain his Brunhilde.

Here is a precious thing, this safeguarding power within us, the true being, the true entity. If we can but know it, if we can but hold to it, if we can give it our whole fealty, it will be like a guardian angel all through our lives. Nothing evil, nothing dark, nothing treacherous can ever lay its finger upon us. If we keep our gaze fixed one-pointedly, then indeed our whole body will be full of light.

Yet if we do not know it we wander, struggling and blinded, and find ourselves in a state of confusion. Sometimes we must come to a decision: shall I do this thing or shall I do that; is this right to do or is that right to do; is this the Truth or is that the Truth; is this false or is that false? There seems to be no surety. Even when we know that a thing is right and is something that the better part of us longs to fulfill, something that may involve a quixotic action or a sacrifice out of all reason, there is still a side of us that does not want to make that sacrifice. The mind will say, "After all, why should you? Haven't you earned the right to do so and so, or to have such and such a reward? Why should you give it up for this idealistic reason? You are just a dreamer; there is no sense to it." And friends will advance specious arguments to show how much better you could serve if you followed the way that your heart does not want to follow, but which your desire does. So again you stand stranded on the very shores, wondering which is the way of the higher Self, which is the way of Truth. We do not always know. We hear the voice of Kabir, one of India's great mystic poets, who says, "Oh man, if you do not know your own self, of what are you so proud?"

We think we know such a tremendous lot; we weigh and measure atoms, we forecast the storm before it falls, we plunge our vision, as it were, into furthest space through the telescope, we compute, by our mathematics and scientific knowledge, that which the eye cannot see. Yet we stand in a world that is torn to pieces because of the self of man; not because of the forces that might sweep down upon us, not because of earthquake or fire or wind or water, but because in man's heart there is this terrible division, because in man's actions there is the godlike and the beautiful and the compassionate, as well as the devilish; this old confusion goes on and on, and sometimes those who follow the devilish and the terrible persuade themselves that what they are doing is right.

In George Bernard Shaw's wonderful play about St. Joan, the priests who are going to burn her at the stake come and plead with her saying, "Oh Joan, we do not want to do this, but it is for your own sake, it is for your soul." They really believed that if they did not destroy her in this cruel way her soul would be lost, so subtle is the mind, so diabolical sometimes is the ego! Because of this ego, because of this struggle, hundreds of years ago, when Christianity was first being organized as a church, the conception of an outside tempter became very prominent. Thus was created the idea of the Devil, the thing which would lead us away from fealty to our great Self, to our Ideal, whether we call it God or by some other name. A choice had to be made between the Devil and God, both of whom were believed to be outside.

Yet occasionally, even in the early Church history, a lamp was lit showing the way to Truth. Michael de

Molinos, a great Spanish mystic of the Middle Ages called on people to look deep within their own being and there find God; He was not on the outside; He was to be found only within. "Thou shalt never be hurt by man or Devil, but by thy self, thy own proper pride," said this man. Because of his teachings the Church took a violent stand against him, and he drew down upon himself the vengeance of the Spanish Inquisition. The self which is one's enemy can act just like an external foe, but we know well enough if we stop to use our minds, that no temptation really exists unless we first have the weakness within ourselves.

What is this thing that gives reality to everything around us, so far as we are concerned? It is this being which we call ourself; and yet within this self of ours, this terrible warfare is waged. Again we refer to Kabir, who says that the warrior in the outer field fights for awhile and then finishes, but the fight of the Truth seeker goes on and never stops until he dies. It is the struggle to find the Real in the midst of the unreal, to find the real Self, the real fountainhead of existence, that is not stained by any qualities. It is pure Being, it is Oneness. It is the same in you as it is in your neighbor and in all living things. All — even the little worm at your feet — have that sense of being, of existing; that love of life; that awareness of being the center of life. So it is with all creatures — the little bird in the tree, the butterfly that floats on the breeze and the fish in the sea that swims for its life when a shark approaches because life is dear to it. Each has that sense that the whole universe is swinging around himself.

I am reminded of a quotation from Royce, the great philosopher of Harvard, who said that somehow we are

under the impression that a pain in us is a little harder to bear than a pain in our brother, that his pain is a pale reflection of our own, and that our joy is much more intense than the joy of our brother could possibly be. He went on to say that we have to learn that in everything that lives and breathes, in every created thing, burns the same wilful, powerful sense of being that burns in us; and when we have learned that, we will have begun to know our duty. These are wonderful words, which could have been taken directly from the Eastern scriptures, from Vedanta, or from the sayings of any of the great mystics throughout the ages.

This Being in us is all that we will ever know of God, of Truth, of the universe; for how could we possibly know anything outside ourselves, that is, really know it? Will the man who is absolutely divested of any consciousness of beauty be able to recognize beauty? You may say, yes, for although he was a rough, uncouth person and had no education, still when he saw a beautiful landscape he stopped to catch his breath. He *did* have it in him or he could not have responded as he did; for we cannot know something that we do not first have within ourselves. It may be latent, it may be overgrown with weeds of thought, with prejudices and desires of one sort or another, but it is there within or it could not be recognized. This knowledge should give us a true sense of release and promise. Think of the dreams mankind has, of the great visions that lift him from the sod clear up to the heavens, think of his dreams of eternal beauty, eternal truth, dreams of utmost selflessness in which one's identity is lost in service of God, of fellow beings and fellow creatures. All these ideals that we treasure in our scriptures, in our

great books, in our immortal poetry, where are they born? They are born in the heart of man. And if man can dream such dreams as these he is capable of realizing them in their fulness. This is what the Vedanta teaching gives to us; in the heart of man is the kingdom of God. We have it also in the words of the Christ, and yet how we have sought to externalize these things, to put them outside of ourselves.

Let us refer once again to the eternal tempter of man, the Devil. He is sometimes called Lucifer, which the encyclopedia says means "morning star" or "light bearer." When we associate him with his fall, we think of him first in the heights, as the great giver of light, beautiful and wonderful, but when we place him in the opposite situation, as the proud one who rebelled against God, and for his pride and arrogance was cast down into the lower depths, he is Lucifer, the fallen one.

This story too has perhaps been externalized, and is just a nice way of taking the responsibility away from ourselves. Possibly the light bearer, Lucifer, was simply another name for the Supreme Spirit in man, the spirit that is light, the spirit that is Truth, the spirit that is boundlessness, that knows no time nor space, nor any barriers that separate us from the Absolute Eternal. But why, we might ask, did not this endless light, complete and whole and absolute in itself, go on? It did go on. Nothing can put out that light, for it is eternal. Have we no part in that light, we who find ourselves struggling and beset by so many unpleasant things from which we wish to escape?

We are told that the Self, the Being in us, is ever connected with the light within, with the Eternal One. But something happened; a division took place. What

occurred when this Oneness was shattered, and when the Absolute became the infinite many? Perhaps what always happens when the thing that is whole is divided and broken up; it ceases to be perfect, it ceases to be that which it originally was. What resulted was light and shadow, life and death, joy and pain, no longer only the absolute Light, absolute Bliss, One without a second.

The great mystics and teachers find it extremely difficult to put these things into words because, when they speak of That which lies beyond limitation, they touch something that is absolute. There are no words that can give any conception of an absolute state of being. Thus they have always had to modify what they said about it: It was existence and also non-existence; it was here and also it was there; it was this and also it was that; it was, and it was not. They had to wipe out all the pairs of opposites in order to give to the aspiring minds some idea of this thing that was beyond their present experience and consciousness.

When we lost our sense of infinitude, when the whole universe lost it — all the creatures and the multitudinous created things — something happened. We began to struggle for ourselves. The mind stepped in, the growing mind, the separated mind, and it brought down all that sense of vastness, of wholeness, into the compass of our own little ego. So instead of saying, "I am That which I am; there is nothing outside of me; That is all there is and I am lost in it," we speak in other terms, saying, "I am so and so; I want this; I want that. I am going to gain ascendancy over my brother. I am going to fulfill my heart's desire no matter what happens to anybody else." This was the first fruit of Lucifer's fall into darkness. But actually

the light from which he fell still exists. Who knows, perhaps he never did fall, perhaps some day we will open our eyes and say what a nightmare we have had, when all is so beautiful, so blessed, so whole.

I AM is never divided. It is only that we are associating and identifying ourselves with this incomplete part, this tiny infinitesimal fragment of the universe. We must change it somehow. We must step out of the smallness, the littleness, the stifling prisonhouse we have created for ourselves, and take our place again in the great heavens.

Everyone recognizes, whatever his lot may be in life, that there is a division in man, that there is a sense of two beings in us. We speak of the conscience. One's conscience tells him to do a certain thing while another side is pulling him in the opposite direction. We all know that. But what is it that can connect us with our Ideal, with that One from whom all vision comes — the great thoughts and surging aspirations of the heart? How can we make connection with this Source; how can we enthrone it in our lives so that it can take complete command over us, so that no more will we question, nor will we hesitate? In that supreme moment all doubt will be wiped away and we will know ourselves for what we are.

Before we can do this we must forget our sense of possession, our selfishness and greed. We must have complete and unalterable faith in the Divine Power, and be able to say with Thomas a Kempis, "If Thou willest that I be in light, blessed may Thou be; if Thou willest that I be in darkness, still blessed may Thou be." That is the voice of the true mystic. But we find ourselves entirely divorced from such a feeling when we are having

an uncomfortable time. We do not say blessed be anything. We say, "How can I get out of this?" We fight and struggle and will often do things that are not quite fair just to relieve our difficulty. This can never be the attitude to help us to know the Self to which we must be true. We must have that Self so dominant in our life, so shining here in our own breast that there will not be any question. It will be like obeying a tremendous command.

The great souls move with such exact precision that sometimes the world does not understand them. They suddenly make a decision and others wonder why they should do so or why in such haste. But they know by the light which they have released within themselves, by the great Self that they have come to recognize as their own true being. They know what their path is, and they must follow it even though they be crucified. They cannot turn away, for the Divine has taken its abode in them.

So let us too aspire to this, let us find the true God, the Light within us, the morning star, as it shines on high. It is always there in the sky of our mind and heart, but we turn our backs on it; we have sold ourselves to that fallen side of us, that light which has become darkness. We have become slaves of our lower mind which can persuade us to do almost anything. We know how the specious mind can persuade one that black is white, that evil is good. We have seen people so bewildered and so twisted in their feelings that they cannot find their way. Christ told us that if our eye be single our whole body will be full of light. How much better it is to keep our eye so intently fixed on that Light and on what we know of Truth and on that about

which we can really say, this is my highest ideal, my best and truest conviction, even in the face of all ridicule or abuse that may follow! If we do this, then the Christ's words must be fulfilled: our whole body shall be full of light.

Perhaps the mystery of the Self that has confronted us through the centuries is not so great a mystery as we believe it to be. It is only that we have turned our faces in the wrong direction and that if we reversed our position and faced the thing that is real to us, it would become as simple as looking out of the window and seeing the sky.

Until we are able to recognize our own great Self, we do not know whither we are going. However, it is never really lost in the world, this great eternal, sublime Truth. Always it comes shining forth whenever there is the least opportunity for it to be understood by mankind. And the real chance of seeing it in its full glory is possible when man feels his own responsibility, for it is within him. Each individual is the same as you and I — a being struggling against his own mental vision to see the way, to discover what is real, although forgetful sometimes that he cannot see his way on a dark night through an impenetrable forest if he extinguishes the light. The only light that can show him the way is not the light of calculation, nor the weighing and measuring by his mind, but the light that says, "Verily, thou art that Eternal." We must experience this light and attain the surety, the conviction and the surging power to go on, no matter what the cost, and be like the blind man in the New Testament who declared he knew nothing only "whereas I was blind, now I see."

It would be the greatest thing in the world if we

could say, "Formerly I was discouraged and full of fear and dread, formerly I was in doubt and confusion, and now I am living in a world of light. Now whether my body lives or dies it does not matter, because I am far greater than my body. The body is just an instrument which I use at this moment; I am eternal, I am Life, Being, Truth. Everything that I think of as Godhead, that I am. I know that the Infinite is beyond anything I can conceive or experience, but whatever it is, I too, am of the same essence; I am That." When this becomes a burning, living experience in our lives nothing will disturb us. The words of Santa Teresa will ring in our ears: "Let nothing disturb thee, let nothing affright thee. All passeth away; God only shall stay. Patience wins all. He who hath God lacketh nothing for God is his all."

Here lies the mystery of human life. When we have found it, never again will there be need to discriminate with our minds. When this has been born in our hearts and we have given ourselves over to That, we will move with and for That, not for our own little selfish desires. Then we will know even as we are known, then we will see not through a glass darkly, but face to face with the Supreme.

That is our destiny and goal, that is our true being, and that we are now, although we have forgotten it for the moment. We think we are lost. We think we are abandoned. We say we are finite. But this is only a dream of the night. We shall open our eyes; we shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make us free.

The wise who know the Self, bodiless, seated within perishable bodies, great and all-pervading, grieve not.

—KATHA UPANISHAD

MEDITATION

by David Grindell

Morning stirs to wakefulness.
Purest air in dawning freshness
draws breath o'er the motionless grass,
wafts pungent new-day perfume
through the silence-enthralled leaves.
And ever about the luminescent dew
patters soft song of caressing drops.

How effortless and joyous their work—
the windless air and the patient water—
yet cleansing, refreshing all nature!

Above the encircling forest
the upclimbing sun, scarce seen,
sends slanting rays of silver
to rouse from brooding pensiveness
the shadowed sylvan glades.
An earth mist of the morning
rises slow in ethereal swirls
over the hoary, drowsy brows
of sunken, mossy ledges
dreaming on the warmth
of another day.

Nature, thou art all in meditation!
Wakeful while yet in repose art thou,
and all a-stir in ineffable tranquility!

When thou art at thy meditation
how shall my mindfulness not be thine?
When that thy forest depths are freshened
shall not also my mind's deeps become pure?

O, let me not intrude upon thy rapture,
only do thou whisper low to me
thy holiest secrets!

AESTHETIC AND RELIGIOUS VALUES

by Alfred Noyes

(Concluded)

Today a great part of our civilization seems to be recapitulating the process which Wordsworth described as taking place in the individual, and to be losing that power of synthesis which is found, at its highest, not in the merely intellectual faculties, but in the vision, sometimes beyond the discourse of reason, which once was the common possession of Christendom . . .

We must dethrone caprice and enthrone the Logos. It is thus, and only thus, that we can reconcile the two necessary principles of Freedom and Authority and save the world from the greatest tyranny that the world has ever known, the tyranny that forces men to walk in processions and believe they are being original, the tyranny that makes us intellectually subservient to individual leaders of an hour . . .

In the popular mind, and in literature, scientific methods have been divorced from philosophy, and a widely spread belief has arisen in direct defiance of the first axioms of science — that the greater values can be produced by the less. Popular theories of evolution (I distinguish between the popular and the more philosophical theories, of course) are of the kind that could account for a Beethoven symphony by tracing the pedigree of the catgut in the violins. Every step of the pro-

cess would be accurate, exquisitely accurate as far as it goes; the only trouble is that it omits the most important factors in the problem: the musical values of the symphony itself; and, most essential of all, its creator, the Composer . . .

We can hardly overestimate the harm that has been done to the modern world in the destruction of all its highest values by the foolish intellectual war that was proclaimed in the early days of the Darwinian theory between science and religion. The vague popular idea that religion and theism are out of date and Christianity an idle dream is, of course, directly traceable to it; and so also are many of the new brutalities in art, literature and psychology. There is not and there never was any ground for such a war between science and religion. There is not any ground for attempting to reconcile them in any premature way. The respective armies move in different worlds. The scientific statement that there is a skeleton under the skin of a living man is not necessarily inconsistent with that man's portrait by an artist, or with his personal character as it appears to his friends and those who love him. If either side had fully understood the other, they would have been in agreement.

Darwin's theory of evolution, for instance, in almost all its alleged facts — as distinguished from explanations — seems to be true as far as it goes. But for literature, and the mind of the world as we know it today, and the minds of the younger generation at the universities, it has been made to mean something that no real thinker could accept for a moment. At one end of the process it is supposed we have a nebula, a cloud of gas drifting about in space; and out of the action and

reaction of the chemical elements in that cloud of gas, and nothing else whatsoever, the human race has slowly and surely emerged, with Beethoven and Shakespeare, and the great cathedrals, and London and New York, and all that they imply. Or you can begin at a later stage, if you like. You can begin at the time when this planet was absolutely lifeless (as the scientists assure us it once was). You can imagine yourself coming as an immortal agnostic from another planet and sitting down alone on the shores of a lifeless sea, confident that, if you waited there in patience for a sufficient length of time, the chemical processes of that lifeless earth and sea one sure and certain day would initiate a series of events whereby the Mauretania would go sailing past you, and a little boy would run up to you and offer you *The New York Times.* But if you *can* imagine a confidence so sublime, I can only suggest that the faith of the agnostic in physical processes is far greater than has yet been realized . . .

In the minds of many young students at the universities evolution really means just that monstrous method of obtaining plus out of minus. Well might Darwin write words which both his enemies and friends have forgotten to read: "That grand sequence of events which our minds refuse to accept as the result of blind chance. The understanding," he wrote in the *Descent of Man,* "revolts at such a conclusion." It was the strongest language that Darwin ever used. Why has it been completely forgotten? . . . It is perfectly obvious to what other conclusion Darwin was quite definitely pointing in that sentence, although he refused as a man of science to go any further in his speculations in that direction. He said once (you will find it in his biog-

raphy) that he didn't wish to speculate on those subjects because it seemed to him that the mind of the Creator must be as far above the mind of man as the mind of Newton was above that of a dog.

It was not a very accurate or a very strong way of stating the real truth. It has been much better stated in a much older way, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my thoughts higher than your thoughts." The distance between the mind of Newton and the dog is measurable; the other distance is immeasurable.

It is unfortunate that the opposite conclusion, the negative conclusion, which Darwin revolted against so strongly, has been accepted by the greater part of the less thoughtful public today as Darwin's chief contribution to science. They believe, these moderns, who reject the miraculous in every direction, that this miracle has taken place, that plus has been produced out of minus; that this gigantic, organized universe of ours has emerged out of homogeneous and lifeless gas, and that this has happened without the movement of any higher Power working through, directing and inspiring the process.

It should be possible somehow in our universities . . . to devise some means of enabling the student to focus his mind differently according to the different orders of truth that he is considering.

May I just give you one suggestion of what I mean? Science tells us that all matter is composed of infinitesimal planetary systems of electrons and protons. Magnify in imagination a certain small part of the material world, the human countenance you love best. Magnify it through a microscope of inconceivable size

until you can see it (with your mind's eye at any rate) as a sort of Milky Way of such infinitesimal electrical systems. You may have been following quite accurately one order of truth, you may have arrived quite accurately at one order of truth, but what has happened to the values in the human countenance that you loved best? What has become of the expression in the eyes? What has become of the human affections that shone through them? Where do they reside? Is it somewhere in the interstellar spaces, as they may be called, between those electrical units? Or is it in the electrical units themselves? Isn't it possible that science in giving us its truths has somehow made us lose sight of the chief values in the universe? Isn't it possible that it has somehow lost the real significance, and that the real significance may be more apparent to the child whose eyes are normally focused, not on electrons, but on the divine expression in the countenance he loves best? If so, this is only one more confirmation from a new angle of a very old statement about philosophers and children.

The way is being prepared by the scientists themselves for the reintegration of which Dr. Merriam spoke: the recovery of the divine significance in the universe . . .

Science is daily demonstrating the power of the mind to master the laws of nature and gain control of its material environment. As the mind grows, the control grows. We can assign no limits to the process, even on this planet. To say the very least of it, this is not inconsistent with the profoundest belief of religion, that the superb control, is vested in Supreme Mind.

To seek the explanation of the lower in the higher, rather than of the higher in the lower is not, after all,

illogical; and it leads directly to the belief that the explanation of the whole is to be found only in the Highest. There is a harmony in things which makes it possible for flashes of intuition to illuminate regions that are quite impenetrable to the ploddings of inductive logic.

"The glory of the sums of things" is too vast and too complex for logic to survey even one cloud-thread in its first elementary fringes. But the glory of that infinite harmony can flash along the chords of the mind in great fleeting movements, when the mind lives at the center with Plato and St. John and ceases to wander along the infinitely distant circumference with its electric torches. The Supreme Mind may be as far above our human conception of intellectual processes as the immediate apprehension of Love is above the processes of logic. There can be no "discourse" of reason in it moving from point to point, but only universal Light, that Light "whose smile kindles the universe," even as it is its Wisdom and its Spirit. But it is above "discourse," not below it . . .

I don't know how the universities are helping the students to communicate. The unknowable reality, as it has been called, is not really unknowable. It is perhaps the most knowable thing that exists, for we, ourselves, are a part of it, and are actually in that communion with it which I have tried to suggest. Earth is no more the center of the universe, but the soul of man has access to a center in which time and space vanish.

"Where?" said the King,
"Oh, where? I have not found it."
"Here," said the dwarf,
And music echoed "here."
"This infinite circle hath no line to bound it,
Therefore its deep strange centre is everywhere.

Let the earth soar through heaven, that centre abideth;
Or plunge to the pit, His covenant still holds true.
In the heart of a dying bird, the Master hideth;
In the soul of a King," said the dwarf, "and in my soul, too."

I should like to remind you of some very striking words of Goethe recorded in his autobiography where he says, "In moral and religious matters man needs a connected series of acts which become habitual," and he goes on to say that the sacraments, the visible symbols of the Divine, are the highest part of religion . . .

Art and literature at their greatest are themselves sacramental in that they reveal the infinite through finite symbols and images. They testify that this mysterious physical universe which they use in their representations is itself of a sacramental nature. If the universe itself has any meaning at all, it is surely this—that we are placed here to rise from order to order of life by a process that the scientists may call evolution, but that the religious call the winning of eternal life.

Meditate as much while on this journey as if you were shut up in a hermitage or in your cell, for wherever we go, we carry our cell with us; Brother body is our cell, and the soul is the hermit who dwells in it, there to pray to the Lord and to meditate.

—St Francis of Assisi

I do see the Being as an intense Reality with my very eyes! Why then should I reason? I do actually see that it is the Absolute who has become all things around us; it is He who appears as the finite soul and the phenomenal world! One must have an awakening of the spirit within to see this Reality. Mere saying is not enough. By the Lord's grace the spirit must be be quickened.

—Sri Ramakrishna

THREE RARE BOONS

by Srimati Gayatri Devi

Rare indeed are three boons and obtained only through the grace of God: human birth; desire for liberation; shelter and association with a great soul.

—Crest Jewel of Discrimination

It would be interesting if we were to ask one another what we considered to be the three rarest boons in life. We would no doubt find that we had decided upon many different things according to our varying sense of values. One might say love is a very rare boon; another, peace; another to be gifted in some way or another. But what Sankara, the philosopher, says in this passage is purely spiritual: human birth, desire for Truth through which liberation comes to the individual, and association with and shelter under a great soul.

Let us take these boons—which are regarded by the philosopher as the rarest of gifts—and consider them one by one. Most of us take our human existence very much for granted. We are here with all our endowments of body, mind, heart and spirit, and we do not think much about it. If we do happen to give the subject any thought, we most likely come to the conclusion that we had very little to do with our coming to earth: some God or Spirit, the Creator has placed us here. However, in our philosophy human birth is not regarded as a casual factor. It is full of purpose, of significance. It has aim and objective, and from the standpoint of truth we cannot entirely ignore it as we go through life.

Vedanta says that the human being is an expression

of the Soul—it is the adventure of the Soul on earth. Consider how many souls there are—how many human beings—on this planet! They are the multiple expressions of the one Soul, the cosmic Soul. Souls come to earth for a definite purpose, but, because as human beings we do not consider ourselves as souls, we are likely to ignore that purpose. What can it be, we may ask. Is there a greater purpose beyond being what we are — enjoying life, participating in all its activities and manifestations? Beyond our expression as human beings, could there be any other purpose? If we are merely human beings, then certainly by experiencing and enjoying life, by suffering through it and learning its lessons, we would fulfill our purpose. But philosophy — which always points to the deeper aspects of existence — says that beyond experiencing and enjoying, suffering and learning, there is a greater purpose. Therefore, human birth is a rare thing. "Rare!" you may say. "So many souls coming and going! Why should it be considered as such a rare boon?

Human existence is not only for the expression or adventure of the soul. It is a very wonderful opportunity—an opportunity, through the enjoyment and the suffering, to accomplish our purpose which is beyond these. Life is neither altogether miserable nor altogether blissful; it is both, and both we must have in order to experience what lies beyond. To know one's Self, to find the Truth, to realize God — this is the supreme and primary aim of human life. For this reason is it rare.

For this reason also the second rare boon is desire —desire to know one's Self, desire to realize the Truth, desire for liberation. How innate is our desire for lib-

eration! We seek it in every phase of life. As human beings we want to be independent; we want to exercise our own power and not feel bound. That is our love of freedom. I am sure many youths are glad to leave home and go to college where they can spread their wings and do what they would like to do, free of constant parental direction. That, too, is our love of freedom. We seek it in our individual life, our family life, our social life, and in our national life. This love of freedom in us is linked with another great love—the love of all loves in the human spirit: love of truth; love of knowledge about ourselves and our Origin. When Sankara says that the second of the three rare boons is to have desire for freedom, what kind of freedom is meant? Individual freedom? Political freedom? Economic freedom? No. Spiritual freedom.

What is spiritual freedom? This question can lead us into many sections of our philosophy, but the basic idea is that the soul is bound as a human being. The very fact that it comes into manifestation through embodiment, in a human form—through matter, through mind, through intellect—it must acknowledge bondage. We are born bound because we do not think of freedom in such terms, we do not think of ourselves as spirit. As human beings we are bound—bound by Nature, Nature's laws and controls; bound by our own mind and all its properties. Analyze yourself and you will see how free you are. You are dictated to all the time by your instincts, your passions, your desires. Your mind leads you this way and that. You cannot always do as you might because something is pulling you in some other direction. This is not freedom but freedom can be had. It is the goal of the spirit. However, in order

to have such liberation there must be the desire for it.

Vedanta teaches the theory and concept of evolution: There is growth, change, progress; there is unfoldment. We are not made complete by merely having become physically, mentally, intellectually mature human beings. We still have to seek spiritual maturity. That is seeking Truth, seeking God, wanting something other than what earth has to offer us. How many of us have said: "A time came in my life when I began to seek!" Perhaps we did not know what we sought, but only that all that we had in the way of security and satisfaction and opportunity was not enough. So we joined churches and organizations only to break away from them unfulfilled. For the fact of joining some organized church does not satisfy the soul's need, but often it is the first act in a man's life by which is recognized that the desire for Truth has been awakened within him. The quickening of the desire for Truth is the mark of evolution, and this longing for Moksha, or liberation, comes to every soul at a certain stage of its life.

It is rare, however, to have this desire for liberation, because the great majority of us are at a stage of evolution where such desire has not yet been quickened. We are still content with the world and its trappings. This marks a low degree of evolution, and the wise call us foolish, ignorant, deluded. We have to have the humility to accept the facts when we are told that we are earth-bound, enamoured of the world, steeped in attachment—with all our treasures laid up here on earth, seeking nothing beyond. As long as the soul can live in such a state of delusion and ignorance and bondage, there will not be any desire for Truth.

The seeking of Truth by religious means, or the realization of God is not an accepted goal for human beings. It is not considered the normal way of life; it is not regarded as something worth having. Even in India where it is understood that the whole aim and objective of human life is God-union, worldliness is held to be its normal course. Sri Krishna proclaims in the *Bhagavad-Gita*: "Among thousands of human beings, scarcely one strives for perfection . . . " Therefore, it is a rare gift indeed, a very rare boon, to have human birth and in that human incarnation to have the desire for complete liberation.

If these two boons canot be appreciated, the third—shelter and association with a great soul—will have no meaning whatsoever.

What is finding an illumined soul—a guru, or teacher? In India even people of the world must have a guru. It is an ancient tradition, and although where there is tradition, there is likely to be a lack of purity, the idea, the purpose behind the tradition is very pure. Human beings need other human beings as examples, as pathfinders, as path-revealers. We would not have any aspiration for God at all if we did not recognize that there have been human beings before us who have realized, have known and found. Our Christs and Buddhas and Ramakrishnas are the realized souls, the world teachers. We are only human beings—in some instances the perfect expression of the human being. But there are some who are pure spirits—rare souls who have come to the realization of the Soul within themselves, and they have become That. Finding such a one, the most valuable act in a man's life takes place — the soul's journey begins. The guru

makes the human being aware of his soul's existence. He helps us to appreciate the worth of human life — the opportunity, the great adventure. He quickens the desire for liberation.

The great Quaker, Rufus Jones, speaking once in Providence, Rhode Island, said that spiritual experience comes to any number of people when they come in contact with an illumined, or even semi-illumined, soul —someone who is enlightened himself. It is interesting to see that this appreciation is growing in the West. It is not hero worship, not as we know it. Hero worship exists in this country. The children have Hopalong Cassidy, men and women the Lana Turners and Clark Gables. All are seeking heroes and heroines in some sphere of life. So should we not seek our heroes or heroines from the spiritual type whose characters are perfect or near-perfect; whose lives are not selfish; whose dedication is complete; who seek nothing on earth? This is what the guru is supposed to be. Not a professional minister, not a preacher on a platform, not someone with a degree in theology from some seminary. That has never been India's idea of a guru. A great majority of them have had little or no formal schooling.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "I am illiterate!" He was not really, but he was not interested in secular education, nor did he learn anything through academic training. He learned everything through intense love of God. The desire to know the Truth was a flame burning at the heart of his existence and brought him realization. To have such realization he — like all other disciples, for teachers must first be disciples — found those illumined souls who could show him the way, who

reassured him, confirmed his faith. In the succession of world teachers the process is the same. A great soul is not a great soul, not a guru — no matter where he might place himself by self-esteem — unless he has reached his inward heights. He must sublimate himself and gain that at-onement with Truth which is the only thing that can accredit him as a teacher.

To find such a one in life is a very rare occurrence, for they do not grow like grapes on vines, nor are they manufactured like lamp-posts and placed on every roadside. In India on every street corner you will find a "holy man." But not everyone who wears the badge of holiness is holy — in India any more than anywhere else. You will find millions of sadhus belonging to every conceivable sect and group, many gurus — the professional ones as well as the real ones. The real ones are the rare ones, because they have reached the very height of the soul's evolution and are no longer interested in delving too deeply on earth. No, not even the Himalayas, as some may think, are covered with rare souls. So, if you are looking for a guru, someone to show you the way, you are no more likely to find him in India than America or elsewhere. In the first place, you have to have eyes to see, you have to have discrimination. The world is full of self-appointed teachers, secondary gurus. They cannot lead souls to God, but they can mislead them, for the soul in bondage cannot lead another soul in bondage, nor the blind lead the blind!

"Rare indeed are three boons, and obtained only through the grace of God: Human birth, desire for liberation and shelter and association with a great soul." If you think that you have all three then you can

count yourself among the fortunate on earth. Even those who do have these three rare boons are not always making progress, because it is not so easy to climb the mountain of perfection. Even if you have the eyes to see someone's divinity and have his influence upon your life, still the work must be yours.

The world is full of disciples as well as teachers, and among them also are the rare ones. In the *Upanishads,* when Yama, the ruler of death, teaches Nachiketa, a lad of pure spirit born with the desire to realize God, he first tests the boy to see if he is qualified for God-knowledge. Nachiketa proves himself, rejecting all the boons that Yama offers him: position in heaven, rulership over the earth, pomp, power, glory—everything the world has to give. Then Yama, greatly impressed, accepts him and he says, " . . . wonderful is the teacher, wonderful is he who can receive when taught by a worthy teacher." So it is a mutual pact between the guru and the soul who would follow the path of discipleship.

There are those who will say, "Why do we need a teacher? Are we not good enough to find our own way to God?" Yes, certainly, if you are so evolved. But all are not Ramana Maharshis. He was a God-realized soul of our time. We do not know if he ever had a teacher but he came to know the Truth. He did not need a guru but this again is a rare occurrence. For the great majority of us there is need for that guiding hand. It does not mean submission, subjugation to someone's authority. It means the benign influence of a life more evolved than our own, the association with holiness which can make our own holiness possible.

If you have recognized the sacredness of your birth and have felt within your breast that desire for the true freedom, do not neglect these blessings that come to you by His grace. Take a step further. Come under the influence of someone who can help you toward your spiritual realization. And if you have already found such a one do not be merely grateful and humble. By believing in your inherent divinity, behold the light of God. Imitate the perfection you see in the guru by trusting your own divinity as you see it manifested in him. See the light of God in your own life — reflected through your being — and make the sacrifice that does away with delusion, ignorance and bondage. Then one day you will be the realizer, the knower of the Supreme; for that is the goal of each soul. For the attainment of that does he obtain the three rare gifts out of the ever-flowing stream of God's infinite grace.

What is the good of that spiritual practice or realization which does not benefit others, does not conduce to the well-being of people sunk in ignorance and delusion, does not help in rescuing them from the clutches of lust and wealth? Do you think, so long as one jiva endures in bondage, you will have any liberation? So long as he is not liberated—it may take several lifetimes—you will have to be born to help him, to make him realize the Brahman. Every jiva is part of yourself—which is the rationale of all work for others. As you desire the whole-hearted good of your wife and children, knowing them to be your own, so when a like amount of love and attraction for every jiva will awaken in you, then I shall know that the Brahman is awakening in you, not a moment before.

—Swami Vivekananda

SPIRITUAL TALKS*

SWAMI SHIVANANDA: One may have any amount of samadhi and dhyana (spiritual concentration and meditation), but one must never forget to love Him. What is the use of this life if one does not love Him?

SWAMI TURIYANANDA: Yes, one is bound to admit that "When one feels oneself as body, one must consider oneself as the servant of the Lord; when one thinks oneself as the jiva, the individualized soul, one must consider oneself as a part of Him; and when one feels oneself as the Atman (Self), one is the same as the Lord Himself."

SWAMI SHIVANANDA: Dakshineswar was as divine and blissful as Kailasa (the abode of Shiva). From morning till one in the afternoon, all were busy preparing for the worship of the Deities and then worshipping them; while Sri Ramakrishna himself was always talking about God, and people sat spellbound listening to him. The atmosphere vibrated with thoughts of God. Even his jokes and funs related to God and culminated in samadhi. He would rest after the midday meal, but only for a short while. The rest of his day was given to discoursing about God. In the evening he would visit the Kali temple and there fan the Mother, then return to his room reeling under divine intoxication. He would often ask those who practiced sadhana if they felt a kind of intoxication in the morning and evening . . . At night there was scarcely any sleep for him. No sooner had he lain down than he would get up and rouse all who slept in his room, saying, "Do not sleep so much. Get up and meditate." He would then lie down again and get up by early dawn and recite the

*Selections from *Spiritual Talks,* Advaita Ashrama publication.

names of God in his inimitable sweet voice. Others also would get up and sit down to japa and meditation. Now and then he would go up to them and correct their postures.

SWAMI TURIYANANDA: In order to realize the Self, you have to scale the highest peak of renunciation.

Is it easy to detach the mind from all objects? Only a hero can do that. The external objects are ever trying to enter into your mind and conquer you. In the mind itself there are many layers, one upon another. It is no use merely closing the eyes and ears.

Egotism is no good; it is extremely pernicious. Egotism is like drinking wine, it leads astray the senses. The Master used to say that water accumulates only in a low land. Only in humility the good qualities of the mind and heart become manifest. Pride always holds the head high. That which is elastic and unbreakable like steel, that indeed is strength. He alone is strong, who can live in harmony with different natures in a spirit of amicable compromise.

Make yourself forever His, then there will be no more fear . . .

If you want to preach, you must also *give* something. Preaching is not merely lecturing to a class or explaining a book. You have to *give* them something. Therefore you must accumulate spirituality beforehand.

A little casual reading of the scriptures and a little meditation are not enough to realize the Lord. You must yearn to see Him. The heart must pant and pine for Him. The Master said to us, "It is because I had such intense longing for the Mother that She gave me every convenience — She gave me this Kali Temple and Mathur Babu (he served the Master with great

devotion and proved helpful to him in many respects during his spiritual endeavor). If there is sincere longing for God, everything becomes favorable."

There is no other way than Bhakti.

SWAMI SHIVANANDA: Quite true. Meditate on His lotus-feet; the senses will withdraw of themselves and the mind will lose itself in Him. Ramaprasada says in a song that devotion is at the root of all spiritual achievements. Ramaprasada was in a sense the ideal of Sri Ramakrishna. The Master used to say, "Mother, Thou hast revealed Thyself to Ramaprasada; why shouldst Thou not to me?" The Master's teaching is Bhakti tempered with Jnana.

SWAMI TURIYANANDA: When will that day come when the very utterance of the name of God will bring tears to my eyes? (To the disciple.) Do you cry when you take His name? Ah, what a supernal condition! Just consider!—The very utterance of His name makes you cry!

SWAMI SHIVANANDA: When I first used to go to the Master, I would often feel inclined to cry. One night I cried much on the riverside near the Bakula tree. Just at that time the Master in his room was enquiring where I had gone. When I returned to him, he asked me to sit down and said, "The Lord is greatly pleased if one cries to Him. The tears of love wash away all mental impurities accumulated through ages. It is very good to cry to God."

Another day I was meditating in the Panchavati grove. My concentration became very deep. Just then the Master came towards me from the side of the Jhau tree. As soon as he looked at me, I burst into tears. The Master stood still. I felt something creeping up

inside my bosom, and I was overcome by an irrepressible fit of shaking. The Master remarked that this crying was not for nothing, it was a sort of ecstasy. I then followed him to his room where he gave me something to eat. The awakening of the Kundalini (the spiritual power) was an easy matter for him. He could do this even without touching, by merely standing near by.

SWAMI TURIYANANDA: Man is trying hard to make himself happy. But nothing succeeds unless He wills it. Freedom can be realized in two ways, by identifying oneself with Him and by living in eternal self-surrender to Him. There can be no freedom of will away from Him.

Reliance on one's apparent self leads to ruin. To presume to be all-knowing is extremely harmful. Self-reliance or self-confidence means faith in the higher Self. To persist in remaining what one already is or in holding on to one's preconceived opinions at any cost—such self-importance is bad.

One must have the capacity to love. Oh, how madly we used to love in our boyhood! I loved my brothers so much that the thought of renouncing them to become a Sannyasi used to make me cry. But afterwards the Master snapped these ties one by one. He asked S.: "Whom do you love?" S. said: "I do not love anyone." "Oh, you dry fellow!" the Master remarked.

Meditation can be on divine forms as well as on Om. As one goes on meditating, the mind gets absorbed in Om. As one goes on "repeating Om and reflecting on its meaning," the mind becomes steady, that is to say, it does not give it up. "Through surrender to God all the obstructions to the concentration of the mind are destroyed and one realizes one's Self."

THE HEART OF RELIGION

by David Gregory

Man's true "holy of holies" is in his own mind before the heart's altar. The outward symbols of true worship should direct his attention inward but seldom do. While gazing upon the material altar, he should be led to look within upon an immaterial point in the breast, where his devotion must one day come to rest. The high priest who serves as a focal point for his attention should show him that the focal point of attention in his own mind is his only true high priest. With it he comes into direct contact with his Overself, the only true intermediary between the ego and God.

Heart-felt worship should replace altar worship. Priestly ministrations should yield to ministrations by the individual's own God-filled thought processes. Neither will bring him into direct touch with the Divine, unless he can understand both as symbols only, and, even while not deserting them outwardly, withdraw from them inwardly in formless, wordless adoration of it. But so long as the leader in spiritual matters is unable or unwilling to give this instruction to his listeners or to those of them who are ready for it, there is still little chance of their being directed, as many should be, toward the inner path.

This has little to do with formal religions or their numerous splinter sects. It is not whether a man calls himself this or that brand of believer that matters, but the quality of his inner and outer life. To rephrase a line of the New Testament, "many join but few belong." Too many are religiously affiliated by inheritance; not

enough, by considered choice. Those who are chosen by a formal faith and grow up in it, do not always grow in their understanding of it and choose it in full awareness of what it means or what they are doing. To live the true faith, as each religion claims itself to be, demands more than a nominal alignment of an individual with others of like persuasion. Joining or associating with a group is not in itself enough.

Many organizations are member-ridden. There are those who talk much about religion but do nothing about it. They serve with their lips but not with their lives. They accept whatever is offered them without question or complaint. But such acceptance is unenlightened sufferance. The articles of faith are swallowed without being digested and so have little effect on the spiritual body. Ignorance of what has been accepted remains practically untouched.

The man of true faith must always escape from encrusted formalism, either within the fold or outside it. No rites can bind his soul, and that always draws him gently unto itself through all the folds of altar cloth and priestly vestment. It must one day bring him into itself within his inmost being, where he may know the basic truth of religion and whence he may transfuse every vein of his nature with it. The direct knowledge of God and the performance of His will is the true religion, whatever name it may pass under among men. It is because God really does exist behind all the sacraments and accoutrements, the signs and symbols, that men must one day penetrate beneath these veils in their own heart's depths and find Him!

But it can never be found among these trappings, for true peace is enshrined in our hearts, not in wood

and stone. Those who look to the hushed air of a church or cloister as a refuge from the world, without also looking into their own inner shrine deep in their hearts, trust to a temporary structure that is at the mercy of time. But the few who have begun to turn inward, either while haunting the temples built for divine worship or after having pretty largely deserted them for a more trustworthy sanctuary within, may worship safely, wherever the body may be, at an altar that will never suffer the inroads of decay or destruction. Men who make churches can also destroy them, or they may crumble away in time. The higher Self within was not made by man; he can neither reproduce it nor blow it to pieces. It is beyond reach of time itself. Nothing can harm or remove it.

The church also is a symbol of the inner silence, where God is worshipped more effectively and more truly without words or music. The quiet of church worship is a relative one, punctuated with litanies and lectures, oratorios and orisons. No liturgy can penetrate the mystic stillness of the inner Being. Its peace is beyond sound. Its very essence is soundlessness. Entering that silence is worship itself, not the outward signs and symbols that public services too easily become.

Remaining immersed or immured in meditative silence is not, however, the final goal of worship. From within it comes the power to do our work in the world. Clinging to the first, we must yet proceed with the second, for the life of divinely inspired action is the true church. The worship of God starts with church services, deepens in mystic meditation but comes to full bloom only in divinized philosophic action. The real church is neither a building of stone nor organized

priestcraft; it is a hallowed life. It is not enough to worship in words alone. They float so easily on the surface without penetrating deeply into the marrow of a man's intentions! Unless religion becomes not only the shell but also the core of his existence, man will remain only on the threshold of the true church. Man must worship God with his life, not merely with ritual. Attendance at a place of worship is no measure of his spirituality. This shows in his every thought and deed. Divinity must be allowed to seep down through every fibre of his being, into his work and play, his character and conduct, his manners and morals, his studies and reflections, his struggles and temptations, his habits and attitudes, his meditation and prayer, his eating and sleeping, his love-making and family-making, in sickness and health, in poverty and wealth.

Where the root meaning of religion is union with God, the full interpretation of that idea, not spelled out in words but lived out in experience, can be only a constant communion every minute of the day, through waking *and sleeping*: to think on It in a certain building for one hour a week, in the midst of spoken or sung praises or penances, is only the beginning of true worship. For the few minutes each week begrudgingly spent in thought on their Maker, how dearly men pay in misery, war, disease, despair, worry, frustration, fear, ignorance and hopelessness! Peace and comfort, security and loving care could be theirs for the asking—*if* they asked again and again with their whole being, with their whole life.

In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart. —Bunyan

INDIA AT A GLANCE

(Letters from Gayatri Devi and Fred Swain)

Calcutta, India
Sunday, November 17, 1957

Dear Everyone:

Would you believe that I do not have a moment's privacy even to write you a few words?

All is well and I am trying to extend my stay for another week. That will mean that the Sunday before Christmas will be given to the Boston Centre and I will fly to California on the following day.

I presided at the flag hoisting ceremonies last Thursday, the 14th, in honor of Nehru's birthday at our Ashrama and spoke in Bengali before the whole school and the Ashrama residents. It was a very impressive function with the girls' parade, drill, and march. We have been to the Dakshineswar Temple, Belur monastery, and Nachiketa's school. Next pilgrimage will be to Kashipur garden house where Sri Ramakrishna spent his last days. We did visit his cremation ground too and saw the picture, *Yugadevata* (Incarnation of the age). It was a very poor production; still to see Sri Ramakrishna portrayed on the screen is quite an experience.

At the moment I am staying with Kanai and his family; Mother goes everywhere with me; Charushila Devi is here today. Tomorrow night and Tuesday I will spend at Maitreyi's house; time is so short that I have to split myself in many parts, so to speak, and satisfy everybody.

Letters from K. and Y. have been most welcome. Please share this one without delay with the household

in Cohasset. This is the first letter I have written since my arrival here. Needless to say you are never out of my mind and heart.

With deepest love, —Gayatri Devi

New Delhi, December 8, 1957

Dear Y:

You won't believe it, but I really have not been able to find time to write. So much has happened. I will try to cover as much as I can in so small a space.

I spent the two happiest days of my life in Japan, until I reached India. The Japanese are the most sensitive and artistic people in the world. We stayed in a Japanese style hotel where no English was spoken. I did not know before that the ordinary processes of living could be so beautiful. Everything went like clockwork in Japan and my visa was immediately granted. On my way back to America I am going to stop again for a few weeks.

We then proceeded to Bangkok which was a bit disappointing. The country has no vitality. In contrast to Japanese and Indian temples, the Siamese temples have very little to offer spiritually, in spite of their beauty.

We landed in Calcutta on November 7 and were met by Charushila Devi, Nachiketa, some of the devotees and the Guha-Thakurta family. Then for the next few days we settled at the Ananda Ashrama at Naktala.

Charushila Devi converted two classrooms into bedrooms for Mataji and myself. I have felt very guilty living in such a fine bedroom, but I had no choice in the matter. Here I must speak of this fine Ashrama and school. It has grown considerably since Mataji was

here five years ago . . . The girls (almost all refugees and orphans) are well trained, very polite, accomplished in many fields, happy, with a real spirit of service. They do beautiful craft work. Their training in shrine duty and worship is most impressive. At morning worship, it is thrilling to hear all of them chanting in deep-throated voices in perfect unison. There are accomplished dancers and singers among them. There is singing every day. When Mataji arrived there were all kinds of celebrations for the occasion, dinners, dancing, singing, speeches, even parades. The Ashrama was turned upside down for us the whole month we were there . . .

Charushila Devi has really accomplished miracles in a few short years. She is now seventy-two and has tremendous vitality. She runs every phase of this fast-growing school. She is deeply loved by all the students, who hold her in great reverence. It is most inspiring to be near her.

In addition to this school and Ashrama, she has another school and Ashrama on the other side of Calcutta at Dum Dum. Dum Dum is fairly close to Dakshineswar. There are at present plans to establish still another large Ashrama near the Ganges, for the exclusive use of the dedicated for spiritual practice. Mataji and I have seen this property which covers a large tract of land and is perfectly suited for this purpose . . .

Nachiketa has been with us almost every day and is due to arrive in New Delhi tomorrow. We have, of course, been to his school and Ashrama. It is a typical Indian school . . . He now has one small house which is used for classes, cooking and eating, sleeping quarters and what have you. There are eighty students enrolled in this school. Nachiketa has sunk his tube well in front

of the house, which is for the use of the entire village. Life there is in real village style. Next to the school Nachiketa purchased a small plot of land for his Ashrama. He has built a small two-room mud hut on it. I sleep at his Ashrama when I have the opportunity. We sleep outdoors on the ground and bathe in the morning in the village tank.

Mataji says this trip has renewed her spiritually, and she is quite right. She has fallen into life here as if she had never left it. It is inspiring to see her storming the gates of Kalighat Temple, barefooted with thousands of other devotees from the streets. Calcutta is a city of Kali worshippers. There are literally millions of them. The very name Calcutta comes from Kali. Kali's picture is plastered all over the city, in street cars, busses, shop windows, restaurants, and on telephone poles. I have been in no home without Kali on the altar. So I have been very happy in Calcutta.

We have been to most all the holy places in Calcutta, to Sri Ramakrishna's cremation ground, quite often to Dakshineswar. The whole city is charged with spiritual fervor. It is a sea of humanity, with many contrasts. But with all its spiritual fervor, we are always aware that Calcutta is the most poverty stricken area of India, and the refugee problem is almost beyond solution. Though I have not yet seen many other areas of India I am anxious to get back to Calcutta. I love it there and feel inspired just being there.

Mataji leaves for America in three days. We are very sad at this. She has many devotees who have very deep feeling and love for her . . . The devotion of the Bengalis is very stirring. She has new disciples in Calcutta. Her room at Naktala has been filled with a

steady stream of devotees and the last day we could hardly move through the rooms and halls of the house to reach the car . . . .

Mataji is bringing her mother with her. In addition, two more Indians plan to come to America about the same time as I. Puragra Parampanthi, the sadhu and monk from Assam may come. He is an advaitist and will do very well in the West. He is a scholar and a devotee also. I think everyone will like him . . .

A day or two after Mataji and Didu leave, Nachiketa and I will head for Benares where we will live with the sadhus and practice sadhana. Then we will have to return to Calcutta in January. Later we will make trips to other parts of India.

One word to those who wish to come to India. It is very difficult for most Americans to adjust to life here in the Indian manner. Only a handful are able to live away from the European hotels. There are a few basic reasons for this. First is the food. It is quite different eating Indian food three times a day, week after week, than the food Mataji prepares on Puja days in America. All the food is highly spiced with hot green and red chilies. Western food in any form is totally unavailable except in European hotels and one or two specialty stores in the large cities. It cannot be expected that Western food be served to anyone. This is true at Charushila Devi's Ashrama as well as elsewhere. In my own case, I have made the transition and can literally eat anything that is given me, even if it has dirt in it. But I know Americans well enough to know that few can do it. Dorris' friend, Don Miller, who came to Nachiketa's Ashrama awhile back is one of those people determined to make the transition.

However I now hear he has lost forty pounds and is sick in Kalimpong.

The other difficulty is sanitation. For instance, toilet paper is almost unknown to the Indians. This is particularly disturbing to American women. I could go on enumerating the lack of certain other basic conveniences that Americans seldom think about; however in my own case, these things do not disturb me and I am having the time of my life. I accept everything in India totally and completely, the bad as well as the good. I wear Indian clothing, gerua in color. The only difficulty I have encountered is the language. But I get by quite well even there.

I won't be able to write many more letters, since I am now going to Benares. There may be other sadhus that will meet us there from Calcutta and we will make a party. So please show this letter around to those who are interested.

I offer my deep apology to all of those that I do not write. I miss all of you truly. I send my love and best wishes for your well being.

Namaskar, —FRED

Calcutta, Sunday, December 1, 1957

Dearest Faithful Ones:

The clock is about to strike seven; and this, my sister Sati's house (where I am overnight) is still quiet with the children asleep, so I can take a few minutes to write while the bath water is being heated. You cannot imagine how difficult it is to get a moment's privacy, consequently I cannot do any work which requires concentration. However, the very air here is so charged with that which feeds my soul that I feel refreshened within, in spite of little rest. . .

The young monk from Assam, the prospective assistant for us, is a fine person, altogether qualified, (so it seems) to work in the West. He is the author of *Advaita Vedanta and Modern Physics* — which was the instrumental cause of our coming together. Lord willing, he will come to U. S. A. in June, next year. Our dear Nachiketa is the same; the most pure-hearted devotee, radiating joy and goodness. His own work absorbs him so his return to U. S. A. now is out of the question.

New Delhi, December 7

Mother, Fred and I are here for four days before starting on the return journey on the 11th morning.

We left Calcutta last evening; many, many persons were at the airport -- devotees, Ashramites, and members of the family. The visit this time has been a moving experience — to be surrounded by such devotion!

I spoke at the Ashrama last Sunday, December 1, before a gathering of many hundred people including the Ashrama residents — students, teachers, children and all. Our friend, Dr. Kalidas Nag who is an ardent admirer of Swamiji (Swami Paramananda) presided. There was pin-drop silence while I spoke for an hour or more about the work and life at our Ashramas in America. Everyone felt inspired. I pray I will be able to share with you what India is giving me from moment to moment. I feel full inside.

This morning we visited the new Sri Ramakrishna Temple here: it is beautiful and simple. Swami Ranganathananda received us most cordially. He is one of the Ramakrishna Mission's outstanding monks. I must stop now.

With prayerful love for all of you,

—Gayatri Devi

ART, RELIGION AND LIFE IN THE FAR EAST

by Dorothy Dengler

In ancient civilizations like China and Japan, there is no separation of religion from art, philosophy, social conduct or sports. Religion is life itself. This relationship is shown in several very interesting books.

Let us look at the *Tao of Painting,* a study of the ritual disposition of Chinese painting. Here painting is not considered a profession, but an extension of the art of lving. The Tao of painting is part of the traditional Tao of conduct and thought, of living in harmony with the laws of Tao. Tao or "the Way" is explained as the abstract first principle, the mystical Cosmic Mother or primal source. It is the basis of the Taoist religion founded by Lao Tzu and expounded by him in the *Tao Te Ching,* a religious classic.

According to Taoism, immortality is to be found in the eternal change permeating all modes of thought. It is the process, not the deed that is interesting; the completing, not the completion that is really vital. The *Tao of Painting* describes painting as that state which is neither speech nor silence, where the transcendental nature of Tao may be apprehended. It is the swift brush strokes and the excellent power of suggestion in Chinese painting that is so effective in communicating various aspects of the Tao.

To express Tao, a particular training and discipline is necessary. It not only makes definite demands on the painter in technical skill, but also in scholarship and character. There are some eighteen basic

principles — six canons, six essentials, and six qualities as well as three faults and twelve things to avoid. Of the six canons, the first and most important one is that the "circulation of the ch'i (spirit, vital force) produces movement of life." This implies an ability to make manifest the constant changing aspects of the ch'i, an ability one has to be born with. Most of the other qualities and essentials one can learn with practice. In painting, the ch'i, the vital force or spirit of the Tao, is both the creative resource of the painter and the essential vitality that can be transmitted to a painting and perceived by the spectator. For creative results, one is urged to still the heart, to become one with the elements of nature or the great creative forces of Tao. A painter has to experience the rhythm of life to be able to express it in his work by means of the rhythm of the brush.

Thus Chinese painting is not self-expression, but an expression of the harmony of the Tao. In the advanced stage, the ch'i of the painter is effortlessly transmitted through the painting. Rules and methods are no longer consciously applied. The excellent brushwork is due less to the personal touch than to the power of the Tao, working through the consciousness of the painter. The painter's efforts in self development are directed by the concept of the Tao and thus become ritual acts sanctifying the painting he produces.

The idea of being one with the Universe, of letting the spirit of God or the Absolute work through one's consciousness in applying the techniques of various arts, is found not only in Taoism, but also in Zen Buddhism. The use of this method in Zen is described in detail in that fascinating little book, *Zen in the Art*

of Archery by Eugen Herrigel, who relates his six years training under a Zen master archer, learning to hit the bull's eye without consciously aiming at it. By becoming one with the Absolute and letting "It" flow through him, the arrow was released at the proper moment and hit the center of the target.

In most schools of archery, one is told to aim at the target. Under this master of Zen, Mr. Herrigel was told not to take aim at the outward target, but rather to aim at the inner goal, the Buddha, the Supreme Being, by self-abandonment, by becoming egoless, by becoming one with "It." Then, when he had achieved the last grade of mastery, he would be sure of not missing the goal. The hits on the target were only the outward confirmations of inner events. To prove this, the master shot at the target in complete darkness, hit the bull's eye, shot again and split the first arrow. Then he said, "It is not I who must be given credit for this shot. 'It' shot and 'It' made the hit." Thus we see how archery is described as the artless art, the unmoved movement, illustrating the law of opposites, one of the basic tenets in Zen philosophy. Opposites, according to Zen, are in reality one, like two sides of the same penny. Perhaps the best illustration of this idea of opposites is the following poem. Anyone who understands it is already a master of Zen.

> One bright morning in the middle of the night
> Two dead men began to fight
> Back to back, they faced each other
> Drew their swords and shot each other.

Herrigel was further told he should not grieve over bad shots, nor rejoice over good ones, but he should free himself from the buffetings of pleasure and pain and rejoice as though not he but another had shot well,

thus elaborating on this idea of the oneness of opposites and illustrating another basic tenet of Zen, the spirit of non-attachment. Herrigel also mentions the use of Zen philosophy in swordsmanship, flower arranging and the tea ceremony.

Okakura-Kakuzo, in his charming *Book of Tea,* gives details of the use of Zen and Taoist philosophy by the tea masters not only in the tea ceremony but in the arrangement of objets d'art in the tea room, and in the construction of the path through the garden to the tea room, to put one in the right mood for the tea ritual.

The whole ideal of Taoism corresponds to the Zen conception of greatness in the smallest incidents of life. Taoism furnished the basis for aesthetic ideals; Zen made them practical. Zen is said to have anchored the aspect of Taoism that tended to soar. Both, using similar concepts and terms, are wordless doctrines in their emphasis on enlightenment through intuition and spirit. To understand Taoism — the ritual, the tea room and the garden outside — one must have an understanding of the basic philosophy behind it, so we will digress a little before describing the tea room itself.

Taoism claims that the secret of success is in keeping the proportion of things and giving place to others without losing one's own position. The idea of totality must never be lost in that of the individual. This Lao Tsu illustrated by the metaphor of the vacuum. He claimed that only in vacuum lay the truly essential. The reality of a room, for instance, was to be found in the vacant space enclosed by the roof and walls, not in the roof and walls themselves. The usefulness of a water pitcher dwelt in the emptiness where water might be put, and not in the form of the pitcher or material of

which it was made. Vacuum is all-potent, because all-containing. In vacuum alone, motion becomes possible. Thus one who could make himself a vacuum into which others might freely enter would become master of all situations. These Taoist ideas have greatly influenced all theories of action such as wrestling, archery and fencing. In jujitsu one seeks to draw out and exhaust the opponent's strength by non-resistance vacuum, while conserving one's own strength for victory in the final struggle. In archery, by making the mind a vacuum, "It" enters and releases the arrow to hit the target. In swordsmanship one is made intuitively aware of the opponent's thrusts and is able to avoid them while accurately striking the opponent in a vulnerable spot.

In art the importance of this principle is illustrated by the value of suggestion. In leaving something unsaid, the beholder is given a chance to complete the idea and thus a great masterpiece irresistibly draws the attention until one seems to become actually a part of it. A vacuum is there for one to enter and fill to the full measure of one's aesthetic emotion.

Japanese Haiku or seventeen syllable poems such as those in the book, *Japanese Haiku,* are a good illustration of the vacuum theory. Many were written by Zen masters like Basho (died 788 A.D.) whose poems illustrate his Zen philosophy. Haiku are composed of three lines — the first and last containing five syllables and the middle line seven. They are not complete or even clear statements. The reader is supposed to add to the words his own associations and imagery, thus filling the vacuum and becoming a co-creator of his own pleasure in the poem. In most Haiku there is

a key word denoting the season of the year directly or by inference, and there is almost always a switch in viewpoint in the middle of the poem preceded by a cut word or three dots. The following examples will serve as illustrations:

In the City Park
Contemplating cherry trees . . .
Strangers are like friends.
Issa

Silent the old town . . .
The scent of flowers floating
And evening bell.
Basho

The vacuum theory also plays an important part in the construction of the tea room (Sukiya) as described in the *Book of Tea.* The term Sukiya signifies Abode of Fancy, Abode of Vacancy or Abode of Unsymmetrical. As an Abode of Fancy it is an ephemeral structure, a cottage or straw hut, built to contain a poetic impulse; as an Abode of Vacancy it is devoid of any ornamentation except for what the owner may place in it to supply satisfaction of some aesthetic need of the moment; as an Abode of the Unsymmetrical it is consecrated to the worship of the Imperfect, purposely leaving something unfinished for the play of the imagination to complete.

The term, Abode of Vacancy, besides conveying the Taoist theory of the all-containing vacuum, reveals the custom of the continual change of decorative schemes. The tea room is absolutely empty except for some special art object placed there to satisfy the aesthetic mood of the moment. Everything else is chosen to enhance the beauty of the principle theme. Just as one cannot listen to different pieces of music at the same time, so a true comprehension of the beautiful is possible only

through concentration on some central theme. To a Japanese the interior of our homes permanently filled with a vast array of pictures, bric-a-brac and statuary, gives an impression of a vulgar display of riches.

The tea room as the Abode of the Unsymmetrical draws attention to the lack of symmetry in Japanese art objects. This is the result of their Zen and Taoist ideals. Since Zen became the prevailing mode of thought in the Orient, art has consistently avoided the symmetrical. Symmetry not only expresses completion, but repetition. Uniformity of design is considered fatal to the imagination. Whatever can be supplied by the imagination is usually not repeated in a painting. Thus we find that landscapes, birds and flowers become the favorite subjects for depiction rather than the human figure which is present in the person of the beholder himself. The dynamic nature of Taoism and Zen stresses the process through which perfection is sought rather than perfection itself. True beauty can be discovered only by one who mentally completes the incomplete. The virility of life and art is found in its possibilities for growth. In the tea room it is left for each guest to complete in his imagination the total effect in relation to himself and his experiences. The simplicity of the tea room and its freedom from the vulgarity and vexations of the outer world make it a true sanctuary where one can contemplate the beautiful undisturbed.

The garden path leading to the tea room is called a roji and signifies the first stage of meditation. It is intended to break connection with the outside world and produce a fresh sensation leading to the full enjoyment of the aesthetic mood in the tea room itself. Tea masters display much ingenuity and creativeness in producing

the effects of serenity and purity along the garden path. Kobori-Enshiu described it well in the following verse:

A cluster of summer trees
A bit of the sea
A pale evening moon.

This close relationship of religion and philosophy to art, sports and afternoon tea, the practical everyday life where spiritual values have a real meaning, is no doubt a higher standard of living than the worship of materialism and technology to be found in the West where the spiritual life is regarded as strange and suited only to monks.

We conclude this review of art, religion and life in the Far East in the Chinese manner:

Notes written in the month of the red roses in the Secluded Nook of Wisdom and Enlightenment in the dark corner of the Halls of Knowledge.

I am unchanging beauty.
I am undying life.
Endless time am I.
I am order in chaos.
I am lull in the storm.
I am fury of the wind.
I am calm of the deep.
I am dark of the wild.
I am crash of the thunder.
I am stillness of the night.
Perfume of the flowers am I
Majesty of the mountains am I.
The quiet solitude of thy soul
is my home.
The peace of thy heart is my rest.

—Swami Paramananda

THE WHIRLWIND ROAD

by Edwin Markham

The muses wrapped in mysteries of light
Came in a rush of music on the night;
And I was lifted wildly on quick wings,
And borne away into the deep of things.
The dead doors of my being broke apart;
A wind of rapture blew across the heart,
The inward song of worlds rang still and clear,
I felt the Mystery the muses fear;
Yet they went swiftening on the ways untrod
And hurled me breathless at the feet of God.

I felt faint touches of the final Truth —
Moments of trembling love, moments of youth.
A vision swept away the human wall;
Slowly I saw the meaning of it all—
Meaning of life and time and death, and birth,
But can not tell it to the men of earth.
I only point the way, and they must go
The whirlwind road of song if they would know.

There are three degrees of self-surrender to God. The first is the thought that He is all, the Spirit immanent in all. The second is that He is manifest in the mind, just as electricity is everywhere, but is particularly manifest in the bulb that gives the light. The third degree is the conviction: He is my Self, He and I are one. The first of these degrees is for meditation and benevolence, the second for meditation and mind-control, and the third is the end of meditation.

—Hari Prasad Shastri

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

ANANDA ASHRAMA, LA CRESCENTA, CALIFORNIA

The Christmas Eve Service is now long past although it remains fresh in memory as the first among the winter's festive celebrations. Srimati Gayatri Devi returned from India in time to put into this sacred birthday observance her renewed ardor of devotion.

A week later the New Year's Eve Service was held as usual at the hushed hour of midnight and culminated in the impressive candle lighting ceremony in which the entire congregation participated.

Swami Vivekananda's birthday was observed privately on the weekend of January 11th. The public celebration, held on Sunday the 19th, attracted many devotees of Vedanta. Gayatri Devi conducted the Service of tribute to Great Swamiji jointly with Darrell Miya. A Hindu dinner was prepared by Gayatri Devi and her mother and served to a large number of people.

February 9th, the day chosen for the birthday observance of the Ashrama's founder, Swami Paramananda, dawned bright and clear after cloudy skies and considerable rain. Many cars climbed the hill, and the Temple was crowded to capacity. Dr. Harold Dryselius shared the platform with Gayatri Devi. After the Service all enjoyed a Bengali feast in the midst of enthusiasm and happy fellowship.

The Temple was charged with a very tangible atmosphere on Sunday, March 2nd, when the public celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday took place. On February 20th, the actual day of his nativity — according to the Indian lunar calendar — the private wor-

ship began, filling the Shrine with a flood of devotion which increased from day to day. An especially large congregation sat in rapt attention to hear the Sunday Service in honor of the Great Master. Music and words of inspiraion all seemed to be touched by the magic of a living Presence. Indra Devi, a deeply devoted friend of India and of the Ashrama (but not an Indian by birth), had recently come from the orient and took part in the Service, expressing her appreciation of India's true spiritual gifts.

The first outside lecture of the season was given by Gayatri Devi at the home of Miss Eleanor Hay in Pasadena on January 31st. Her subject was *India at A Glance*. Again on February 28th Gayatri Devi spoke in Miss Hay's home, this time on *India and The Yogis*. In the first of these lectures many of speaker's experiences and contacts during her recent visit to India were revealed.

The month spent in India, from November 7th to December 11th, was most gratifying for Gayatri Devi after an absence of nearly five years from her motherland. She spend most of the period in Calcutta with Sister Charushila Devi, who is Ashrama-Mother of two religious and educational centers, with six hundred young Indian women under her immediate care, influence and supervision. Gayatri Devi gratefully availed herself of this opportunity for close relationship with her saintly and inspired spiritual sister. Regularly they sat together conducting the morning class of religious instruction for the Ashrama girls, and travelled to nearby places of pilgrimage such as the Temple of Dakshineswar, the Sri Ramakrishna monastery at Belur, Holy Mother's house and Kashipur

Garden. Their trips included a twenty-four hour visit to Santiniketan, Rabindranath Tagore's University and Ashrama of inter-cultural significance.

In Calcutta as well as elsewhere — New Delhi and Bombay — Gayatri Devi met informally with many devotees and friends, declining all invitations to give public lectures. On several occasions, however, she spoke at receptions accorded her at both the Ashramas in Calcutta before large and small assemblies, telling primarily, by request, about the work of Vedanta in the United States.

Vedanta Centre, Cohasset and Boston Mass.

In the faithfulness of the few is the strength of the eastern Centre. During the continued absence of its leader Services are held regularly at the Boston Chapel on Sunday morning and Wednesday evning, and the festivals are observed in an atmosphere of devotion and sincerity.

Gayatri Devi stopped only for a six days' visit to Cohasset on her return trip from abroad, to bring stimulus and inspiration to the group. She gave one public address in Boston on December 18th, 1957— speaking on, *India and the World.* The Chapel was filled with an enthusiastic and appreciative group.

Throughout the winter devotees have come and continued to come to the Cohasset Ashrama from time to time to attend the daily Services and carry away the renewed sense of security that the peace retreat has to offer them.

While in Frankfurt, Germany (for a day and night — December 14th and 15th) Gayatri Devi came together with the friends of Vedanta there and spoke

before an intimate group on *The Need of Inner Life.*

On the transcontinental journey from Boston to Los Angeles, Rochester, New York and the home of the Carlsons was once again the stop-over for Gayatri Devi and her two companions. There, on Sunday, December 22nd, a meeting was arranged which was a combination of a religious service, informal lecture and social exchange.

Refreshed by the atmosphere and hospitality of her freinds' home, Gayatri Devi returned on December 23rd to California where she was received with gratitude and appreciation. Some of the sermons that have inspired the western congregations in recent weeks have been: *Time and Eternity, Blessed Are the Pure, Power and Personality, Divine Ecstacy,* and *Master and Mother.*

A NOTICE

With this issue the *Message of the East* enters upon its forty-seventh year of uninterrupted publication. We send out heartfelt thanks to our many readers and faithful subscribers whose steadfast interest and support have encouraged us through the years.

We trust that through the will of the Supreme the "Message" will continue in its service bringing fresh stimulus and inspiration to Truth lovers everywhere. May it, while travelling to all parts of the globe, help spiritual aspirants to reflect more deeply upon life's profound, unchangeable laws and thus impart to them tranquility and wisdom in ever greater measure. This is our sincere prayer for our friends in as yet young 1958.

May we here remind our subscribers that this is the time for them to renew their subscriptions.